

Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
Opening of Takoma Aquatic Recreation Center	2
Reminder to Pay Taxes	2
Success of Health Care Alliance	3
Anacostia Waterfront Corporation Board of Directors	3
District Activities	4
Community News	4
Upcoming Events	4

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF
THE MAYOR

John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
<http://dc.gov>

Message from the Mayor

I'm very pleased with the President's FY 2006 budget for the District of Columbia. Several highlights in the budget benefit the nation's capital as we strive to provide better services for residents and build upon the progress we've made in the last six years.

President Bush proposed to increase our Medicaid reimbursement rate for foster care and adoption services from 50 percent to 70 percent. The change reflects the President's confidence in and support for the improvements we've made in foster care and adoption services. I'm pleased the children in our system will benefit directly.

The President also offered to work with us to review federal land in our city. This review will determine if the District can take over or redevelop some federal land sites—thus boosting our tax base. This feature of the budget has tremendous potential for expanding neighborhood development.

I'm also pleased that the President's budget fully funded DC TAG—our Tuition Assistance Grant Program—to the tune of \$33 million. That's an increase of more than \$7 million. The increase allows this innovative and valuable program to continue for District students who wish to attend participating public colleges and universities across the country at in-state or discounted tuition rates.

In June, I had a chance to congratulate the college graduating class of 2004—these students were the first recipients of the DC Tuition Assistance grants. Some of them proudly attended schools such as Howard University, the University of Virginia, Bowie State University and State University of New York (SUNY) at Binghamton, NY. Since its inception, the program has provided \$63 million to more than 6,500 students to attend colleges and universities all over the United States.

President Bush included \$5 million in funding for the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, and \$15 million for planning and security costs associated with federal events in the District. He also continued his commitment, amounting to \$42 million, to the three-sector approach to education—public schools, charter schools and scholarships.

Finally, the President included \$7 million for a new bioterrorism and forensics lab in the District, building on support last year from the US Senate. I'm proud that we're effectively building a strong working relationship with President Bush and his staff.



Opening of Takoma Aquatic Recreation Center

On February 12, I participated in the grand opening of the Takoma Aquatic and Community Center in Ward 4. The aquatic center is located directly behind the former Takoma Recreation Center, which has been converted into a multi-purpose community space with meeting rooms, a computer room, a classroom, storage space and restrooms.

The Takoma Aquatic and Community Center will seat 500 spectators, with a balcony and bleachers overlooking the pools. The center is the only facility in the District of Columbia large enough to host swimming and diving championships.

We've made other progress in Ward 4:

- We've helped ensure that District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) repaired many of the aging schools in the area and began construction of a new Brightwood Elementary School.
- We're proud Lafayette Elementary School achieved national recognition for its academic excellence and received a Blue Ribbon School of Achievement award.
- We've continued the construction of affordable housing units in the Lamond Riggs community.
- And we're continuing to address community quality-of-life and service-delivery issues for residents of Ward 4.

Throughout the city, we've provided new recreation opportunities. We've opened:

- Emery Recreation Center (Ward 4)
- Kennedy Recreation Center (Ward 2)
- North Michigan Park Recreation Center (Ward 5)
- Sherwood Recreation Center (Ward 6)
- Girard Park Playground (Ward 1)
- William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center (Renovation - Ward 6)
- Fort Davis Recreation Center (Ward 7)
- Hillcrest Recreation Center (Ward 7)

And now we have the Takoma Aquatic and Community Center.

I was very excited to be a part of such a magnificent gift to the Takoma Park community. It will be a place for our children to play, a place for our families to spend quality time, and a place the entire community can be proud of.

Reminder to Pay Taxes

It's that time of year again. Many of you may have already received your W2s. If not, you should be receiving them soon.

To save time and get your refund more quickly, file your DC tax return electronically at the District's online Taxpayer Service Center at <http://cfo.dc.gov/otr>. Your tax return is secure, your personal information is private, and you can prepare and immediately file your taxes from anywhere at any time.

In 2003, 91,000 District taxpayers filed electronically—a 29 percent increase over the previous year. Additionally, 20,000 business returns were filed electronically—a 189 percent increase over the previous year.

I also want to encourage those who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit to take advantage of it. Last year, 90 percent of eligible taxpayers benefited from the DC Earned Income Tax Credit or the Low Income Tax Credit.

The District's Office of Tax and Revenue provides tax preparation assistance at its Customer Service Center at 941 North Capitol Street, NE, and at the Penn Branch Municipal Center at 3220 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Taxpayers may also call the Customer Service Telephone Center at (202) 727-4829.



Success of Health Care Alliance

Our efforts to create a stronger system of affordable health care for our residents are paying off.

On February 2, I joined Dr. Gregg Pane, director of the DC Department of Health, Dr. Nicole Lurie of the Rand Corporation, and Sharon Baskerville of the DC Primary Care Association, in sharing some very encouraging data about health care in the District of Columbia with members of the media.

Several years ago, we made a commitment to provide comprehensive health care coverage to low-income residents in the District. We expanded Medicaid coverage for children and their parents, and we created the DC HealthCare Alliance to cover residents earning less than 200 percent of the poverty level.

These programs are having a major positive effect on health outcomes for low-income District residents. In Fiscal Year 2004, Alliance members significantly decreased their use of hospital emergency rooms and increased their use of primary care. This change is healthy for our residents, who now have greater access to early prevention, diagnosis and care for chronic conditions. It's also healthy for the District's budget because we are shifting to more effective and less expensive primary care.

A study conducted by Dr. Lurie from Rand shows that since we expanded health coverage, we have significantly reduced avoidable hospitalizations for low-income children and adults. The District of Columbia is the only jurisdiction in the United States to offer universal coverage for all residents earning less than 200 percent of the poverty level. And we are now seeing results that show this expanded coverage is helping DC residents live longer, healthier lives.

Anacostia Waterfront Corporation Board of Directors

Our recently launched Anacostia Waterfront Corporation has a new board of directors.

A decade ago, the Anacostia was declared one of America's 10 most threatened rivers. When I thought about what I could contribute to this city as Mayor, the restoration of the Anacostia River was a top priority. I was convinced we needed a corporation with a singular purpose to give the Anacostia River the attention it deserved.

I've always felt that the Anacostia River should be one of our most valued natural resources—that it should be reconnected to the life of our city and our neighborhoods. With the development of the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, we will see restored wetlands and a beautiful landscape along the Anacostia.



On February 4, we celebrated a giant step toward these goals with the swearing-in of the AWC's board of directors.

Each new board member takes on a challenge and makes a personal decision to serve his or her fellow citizens and our environment by preserving and enhancing one of the District's greatest natural assets, the Anacostia River.

Mark Twain once remarked, "Everybody talks about the weather but nobody ever does anything about it." The board members are doing something for our city—and I'm grateful to them for their service.

I'm proud the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation Board of Directors is made up of the talented people below:

- Stephen Goldsmith (Ward 3) (Chairman Designate)
- Carl C. Cole (Ward 8)
- C. Greg Farmer (Ward 6)
- Marie C. Johns (Ward 3)
- Eric Price (Ward 2)
- Mitchell N. Schear (Ward 3)
- Loretta Q. Tate (Ward 7)



District Activities



Mayor Anthony Williams, Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley and Sierra Leone Ambassador Ibrahim M. Kamara announced February 3 that Baltimore and the District would donate school supplies to Freetown, Sierra Leone, as part of a Glocal Forum program.



Mayor Williams, seated along with Councilmember Kathy Patterson and Senior Education Advisor Michelle Walker, listened as School Board President Peggy Copper Cafritz and DCPS Superintendent Clifford Janey testified at the Mayor's annual education budget hearing on February 15.

Community News

- [Agencies Partner to Provide Housing Assistance for Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders](#)
- [Stadium Job Fair to Recruit for 900 New Jobs](#)
- [Mayor Announces Departure of Corrections Director](#)

[View All News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2/19 | Construction Career Opportunity Day
10 am – 2 pm
St. Matthews Lutheran Church
222 M Street, SW
Contact: Louis Brown, (202) 648-5099 |
| 2/19 | Grand Slam Job Fair
9 am – 5 pm
DC Armory
2001 East Capital Street, SE
Contact: Department of Employment Services, (202) 724-7000 |

